

I'm optimistic about enlargement, Mr. President. I think that enlarging the NATO family of democratic nations, this value-based organization, is a plus. And I hope that tomorrow will see invitations.

I also hope that we'll see a positive and constructive meeting with the—President Putin and the NATO-Russia Council, with the right tone and the right ambition for practical cooperation.

I'm, like you, Mr. President, optimistic about—optimistic about missile defense. I think the alliance will take a clear position on missile defense, recognizing the threat and working on the answers to that recognized threat.

And last but not least, Mr. President, you mentioned another issue which readily will be discussed: Membership Action Plan for Ukraine and Georgia. I think this can never be a question of “whether.” The “whether” is not questionable. If these nations fulfill the criteria and if they want to enter—want to enter themselves through NATO's open door, I think that door should be open. So that is a discussion that certainly—we certainly are going to have.

We have a large agenda; we have a full agenda. It will be not only NATO's biggest summit ever, but it will also be a very interesting political summit with, I think, very good results.

Mr. President, once again, thank you for having us.

**President Bush.** Thank you, sir.

**Secretary General de Hoop Scheffer.** Thank you.

**President Bush.** Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:15 p.m. at the JW Marriott Bucharest Grand Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to President Mikheil Saakashvili of Georgia; and President Vladimir Putin of Russia. Secretary General de Hoop Scheffer referred to President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan.

## Remarks at a North Atlantic Council Summit Meeting in Bucharest

April 3, 2008

**President Bush.** Mr. Secretary General, President Basescu, thank you all very much.

For nearly six decades, the NATO alliance has been the hope of a world moving toward freedom and justice and away from patterns of conflict and fear. During times of great challenge, we have advanced our ideals. We've stood firm in defending them—firm in defending them, and we have offered NATO's promise to nations willing to undertake the hard work and sacrifices required of its members.

Since the end of the cold war, NATO has welcomed 10 liberated nations to its ranks. These countries have brought new ideas, new enthusiasm, and new vigor. NATO's embrace of these new members has made Europe stronger, safer, and freer. These countries have made our alliance more relevant to the dangers we confront in the new century.

In Bucharest, we're inviting more nations to join us. I'm pleased that the alliance has agreed to invite Albania and Croatia to become members of NATO. Both these nations have demonstrated the ability and the willingness to provide strong and enduring contributions to NATO. Both have undertaken challenging political, economic, and defense reforms. Both have deployed their forces on NATO missions. Albania and Croatia are ready for the responsibility NATO brings, and they will make outstanding members of this alliance.

We regret that we were not able to reach consensus today to invite Macedonia to join the alliance. Macedonia has made difficult reforms at home. It is making major contributions to NATO missions all—abroad. The name issue needs to be resolved quickly so that Macedonia can be welcomed into NATO as soon as possible. In the interim, NATO needs to intensify its engagement with Macedonia—Macedonia to make sure that NATO looks forward to the day when Macedonia takes its place among the members of the Atlantic alliance.

Albania, Croatia, and Macedonia all know the difference between good and evil, because they clearly remember evil's face. These nations do not take their freedom for granted, because they still remember life without it. These nations respect the hard work of building democracy, because they brought it to life in their countries.

The United States and all members of the alliance strongly support the aspirations of their people, and we pledge to stand with them as they continue to work on reform. Together we will continue to help build a Europe that is stable, strong, and free. We'll bring more stability to a once troubled Balkan region. We will be able to demonstrate the benefits that come from siding with the forces of freedom.

NATO's door must remain open to other nations in Europe that share our love for liberty and demonstrate a commitment to reform and seek to strengthen their ties with the transatlantic community. We must give other nations seeking membership a full and fair hearing. As we invite new members today, we're also clear that the progress of enlargement will continue.

The alliance has always welcomed those willing to make the sacrifices necessary to protect our nations and serves as forces for peace. And that is what's made our alliance unbreakable, and that is why NATO remains the most successful alliance in the history on behalf of human freedom.

Congratulations, and thank you.

**Secretary General Jakob Gijbert "Jaap" de Hoop Scheffer of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.** Thank you very much, Mr. President.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:05 p.m. at the Palace of Parliament. In his remarks, he referred to President Traian Basescu of Romania.

### Remarks Following a Discussion With Prime Minister Calin Popescu- Tariceanu of Romania in Bucharest April 4, 2008

**Interpreter.** Hello; good day. Of course our discussion was a very useful and very pleasant one. We discussed both bilateral issues between Romania and the United States. I expressed to the—to President Bush our gratitude for having had the trust to have Romania organize this important NATO summit in Bucharest.

The organization of the NATO summit in Bucharest was very symbolic. It is part of a much larger vision and concept, this vision being that to strengthen and to unify Europe

after the fall of the Iron Curtain. And the idea was to foster, to strengthen the alliance in the eastern and southeastern flank, from the Baltic Sea all the way to the Black Sea and the Mediterranean. That is how we have to interpret the membership of Albania and Croatia to NATO, the future membership of Macedonia, and eventual Georgia and Ukraine membership as well.

But our discussion was not limited to that. We also discussed other issues of political and economic relationship between our countries and about the U.S. investments in our country. And I shared with President Bush my ambition, my hope, and actually, my dream that to see a very important industrial investment from the United States in Romania, an investment with which generate common interests and would foster even more our partnership. And I'm referring to the Ford company and of course, a common interest like this would make me feel, as a citizen and as a Prime Minister, much more protected by our common interests.

I would like to also mention another initiative which was announced by the President yesterday, which was the creation of an American-Romanian foundation which will set up educational programs and grants for Romanian students. I'm talking about the seed money of \$100 million, which could be—

**Prime Minister Popescu-Tariceanu.** One hundred and fifty.

**President Bush.** One hundred and fifty. Don't short-change it.

**Interpreter.** —\$150 million, which in time will arrive at \$1 billion investment, which will create—which would be an investment in the future, creating the future—Romanian Ambassadors to United States or the American Ambassadors to Romania—it would be our hope.

**Prime Minister Popescu-Tariceanu.** Thank you.

**President Bush.** Thank you, Mr. Prime Minister. We just had a great—we had a good meeting, because we're good friends. All right. Okay, I'll just keep going.

**Interpreter.** I was actually told that everybody speaks English, so I should not interpret.